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TAGS: [PREL](#) [EPET](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: PM BAKHIT'S WORKING VISIT TO BAGHDAD

REF: AMMAN 5711

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) Summary: Prime Minister Marouf Bakhit and seven Jordanian cabinet ministers traveled to Baghdad August 15 for a working visit. A new Jordanian Ambassador presented his credentials to the GOI during the visit. The trip followed PM Maliki's July 27 meeting with King Abdallah and Bakhit in Aqaba (reftel). Jordanian officials and press hailed an agreement under which Iraqi would provide discounted oil to Jordan, though it is unclear when Iraq will be in a position to do so. Talks also focused on the status of Iraqis living in Jordan and the GOJ's support for the Iraqi reconciliation process. End summary.

¶2. (C) Bakhit was upbeat about the visit in his debrief to the Royal Palace. Bakhit can claim to have made a deal with the Iraqis that theoretically could alleviate the GOJ's budget-busting bill for the subsidized fuel it provides to Jordanian consumers. Iraq would provide 10,000 barrels per day (10% of Jordan's consumption) at an \$18 discount (\$9 after deducting transportation costs). The reality is that getting the oil to Jordan's Zarqa refinery on a regular and reliable basis will be problematic at best, something the Interior Minister admitted to Ambassador. But the headlines about the deal reflect well on PM Bakhit, at least for the moment.

¶3. (U) In a Baghdad press conference after the meeting between the PMs, Bakhit confirmed that Jordan supports PM Maliki's National Reconciliation Plan and offered to host a conference of Iraqi religious leaders in support of it. In reference to a question about Iraqis present in Jordan who are wanted by the GOI, Bakhit said, "under clear directives of his majesty the King, Jordan will not agree to the presence on its land of any person who harms Iraq or the people of Iraq."

¶4. (C) Jordan's Ambassador to Iraq, General Ahmed Lowzi, accompanied the delegation and presented his credentials. He will remain in Iraq for a few weeks. According to the Jordanian MFA, Lowzi will reside in the International Zone temporarily, carry out consultations with the GOI and give several press interviews before returning to Amman while the GOJ and GOI continue discussions over permanent, secure accommodations for Lowzi.

¶5. (U) This cable was coordinated with Embassy Baghdad.

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Hale